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ABSTRACT

This social studies unit about discovering Germany is intended for use with elementary students. The unit states objectives; discusses strategies and evaluation; lists materials needed; addresses national social studies and geography standards; and cites the contents. It introduces the five fundamental themes of geography: (1) location, (2) place, (3) movement, (4) environment, and (5) region. Diverse activities are suggested for elaboration of the five themes. Includes 10 resource sheets. Lists activities using mental mapping, graphic organizers, and a Venn diagram. (BT)

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DISCOVERING GERMANY

-A social studies unit for elementary students using

The five fundamental themes of geography

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Please call for a workshop or presentation

OBJECTIVES:

Children will read information about Germany in order to make comparisons between Germany and their own neighborhood.

STRATEGIES:

The unit uses a variety of strategies. Children read and respond to a variety of writing prompts. There are different kinds of data to compare.

MATERIALS:

* The unit includes a text to read about Germany followed by questions for discussion.

*There are activities for incorporating the text with the five fundamental themes of geography which teachers can use for individual assessment or for group projects.

*There are suggestions for small group projects.

EVALUATION:

Activities for written responses are included after the text.

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NATIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS:

I Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity so that the learner can:

a. Explore and describe similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures address similar human needs and concerns

III Social Studies programs should include experiences that provide for study of people, places, and environments so that the learner can:

g. Describe how people create places that reflect ideas, personality, culture, and want and needs as they design homes, playgrounds, classrooms, and the like

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHY STANDARDS:

3. How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on the earth's surface

12. The processes, patterns, a and functions of human settlement

13. How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the diversion and control of earth's surface

CONTENTS

* Comparing Germany/Our Community using the five fundamental themes of geography

* Student activities incorporating the five themes of geography

* Using data to compare climates

*"Discovering Germany" text and questions

*Using graphic organizers

USING THE FIVE FUNDAMENTAL THEMES OF GEOGRAPHY

IN ORDER TO DISCOVER GERMANY

The five fundamental themes help organize our thinking about a region under study. Children learn more and can use their understanding to write effectively when their thoughts are organized. Teach the five fundamental themes to students. This is one way to help them become better students of social studies.

1. The first fundamental theme is LOCATION. Whenever we give or receive directions, we use the theme of location. This theme can be introduced to students as part of literature based reading. In the story "Lyle, the Crocodile" the author purposely gives an exact location, East 88th St., New York City, as the setting of the story.

2. The second theme is that of PLACE. The author in a text creates a sense of mood by describing a place so vividly that the reader feels as if he/she were there. How often people, while visiting new places, think back to the settings authors have described in novels. At an elementary level, "The Secret Garden" is an excellent example of how the theme of place sets the mood for the story.

3. The third geographical theme is one of MOVEMENT. Ideas, concepts, languages, and vocabulary move. English has borrowed many words from other languages. "Mike Mulligan and His Steam shovel" are a good book to use when introducing the concept of movement to students.

4. The ENVIRONMENT places an increasingly important part of science curriculum. The change man has wrought on the environment and the ways man has adapted to his environment are important parts of geography. "The Great Kapok Tree" is a good book to introduce children to the concept of human environmental interaction.

5. The last theme is that of REGION. "The Story about Ping", written over fifty years ago, is a good literature based text to introduce this concept to children. There are many examples of location, place, environment, and movement in this book, which teach children about life in China. The illustrations are adequate, but cutting pictures out of the National Geographic Magazine augments the text illustrations. The photographs in the magazine better show the themes of geography to the children.

ACTIVITY: Children complete a web for the five fundamental themes as they read through the text. The web becomes an outline for writing articles (reports) or personal narratives. The web is also useful when constructing travel posters, or travel maps. The web is important in itself in that children organize specific social studies vocabulary which assists in retention of concepts.

FUN THINGS STUDENTS CAN DO WITH

THE FUNDAMENTAL THEMES OF GEOGRAPHY

LOCATION:

1. Before beginning the unit ask children to draw a free-hand map of Germany and Germany. As children to locate and label as much information as they know. This is an example of MENTAL MAPPING. It allows the teacher to assess what children already know and what misconceptions they might have.

2. After completing the unit, again ask students to draw a free-hand map of each country. You can use the two sets of maps to assess how much information the children have learned during the unit. Learning to draw free hand maps is an important skill. Remember to introduce the elements (attributes) of a map so that children construct maps correctly.

3. Locate Maryland (or your own point of reference) and Germany on class maps. Relate geography as to differences in points of references.

4. Children encode/decode physical data and political/cultural maps for Germany and Germany. The grade/ability level of each group determines the amount of information. Always reinforce the attributes of a map. Use words like encode, decode, or construct when working with students.

PLACE:

1. Children make post cards to send to a friend. Post cards represent physical or cultural landmarks. Children address the back of the post card and write a one or two sentence note about the landmark on the front. This is a language arts/social studies integrated project.

2. Children construct commemorative postage stamps for each region. A cultural

landmark, a physical landmark, an emblem, icon, mascot of a country is suitable. Show children real life examples of domestic or Germany or Germany postage stamps. Children can design their own currency, too.

3. Use pictures of landmarks from National Geographic Magazines to help children identify man-made or natural landmarks from Germany or Germany. You can use these for a bulletin board.

ENVIRONMENT:

1. Write reports on any of the indigenous plant or animal life in the region. This is a good integrated activity for science units.

2. Children investigate an environmental concern and how Germany has worked to solve the problem.

3. What does "green" stand for? How does being green affect policy in Germany?

MOVEMENT:

1. Children make a list of types of transportation in each country. They list the people, goods, and services, which use each method of transport. Intercity and intra-city transport can be studied.

2. Children locate and label countries from around the world where immigrants to Germany have come from. This can be made into a pictograph for an integrated math activity.

3. Find advertisements or logos from companies which sell products in our country.

4. Children locate and label places throughout the world, which receive imports from Germany, or countries from which Germany imports goods or services.

REGION:

1. Children construct mobiles with coat hangers (ala Calder) or hang the pictures on one single string. Each picture should reflect a fundamental theme. Picture from Travel brochures is a good size for this kind of project.

2. Children watch a video of Germany. As they watch they fill in a web using the five themes. They become active viewers of a primary source.

3. Children construct a travel poster with 3 parts: country name, large illustration, and a descriptive sentence telling why tourists should visit the region.

4. Children develop a travel poster using one item from each of the five themes. Prior experience using travel brochures is helpful. Travel agencies will give these to you, especially in November when prior editions become obsolete.

DISCOVERING GERMANY

RESOURCE SHEET 1: LOCATION

Flying from Baltimore to Germany is a distance of almost 4,000 miles. You will fly almost due east. Germany is a large country about the size of Montana. It is located on a broad plain in north central Europe. There are many geographical features, which help us locate Germany on the map. The North Sea and the Baltic Sea wash the shores of Germany. Many European Countries border Germany: Netherlands, Luxemburg, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Denmark. The Rhine River is the one of the most important rivers in Germany. When you locate Germany on the map, look in the Eastern Hemisphere, the Northern Hemisphere, and look for the latitude 52N and longitude 13E. As we will see, Germany and our community have many similarities and differences. Germany is a varied country. It can be divided into three regions: the North Plains, the Central Highlands, and the Southern Mountains. The landscape is similar to our country. Many of the same plants grow here, too. The architecture is different, however. Buildings are constructed differently. The northern plain is densely populated with gently rolling hills and soil that is good for farming. The central highlands are famous for scenic valleys, rivers, and hills which German enjoy hiking through. Farming is still important here, too. The southern mountains are part of the Alps system. Several mountains are snow-capped all summer long.

RESOURCE SHEET 2: PLACE

There is so much that tourists visiting Germany enjoy! There are many natural and man-made landmarks which people think of when they remember their visits to Germany. Natural landmarks were created by nature. The Rhine River flows through much of Germany. The Rhine valley is picturesque. There are many rock formations to see. The Black Forest in the southwest as well as the Alps Mountains in the south is interesting to see. Traveling by train is one way to enjoy the scenery of every part of Germany.

Cultural landmarks are man-made. Germany has been the scene of many important historical and cultural events which people find interesting. People want to come to Germany to learn more about these events. The Olympics were held in Munich. Berlin is the largest city and capital of Germany. Before 1989, it was a divided city, but after the 1989 Berlin, and all of Germany, were reunited. This makes it easier for tourists to visit sites such as the Brandenburg Gate, the Charlottenburg Palace, and the Island Museums with world famous collections of ancient artifacts. Cities like Cologne and Aachen are noted for their cathedrals. Since there were many royal families in Germany at one time, there are famous palaces to visit such as those located in Weimar, Munich, and Berlin.

RESOURCE SHEET 3: HUMAN-ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION

The German climate is noted for warm summers and mild winters. The climate of Germany is very good for tourism. The climate has been very good for farming also. Generally the soil of the northern plain are fertile and well drained. German farmers grow enough food to feed Germany's population. Germany is a heavily populated country. Urbanization encroaches on more and more open space each year. With increasing urbanization, there are pollution problems. Germans use catalytic converters to decrease automobile exhaust. The rail system is fast and efficient. Trains run on electricity. Atomic energy, wind power and coal-burning hydro-electric plants are used to make electricity. Industrial areas are responsible for acid rain. Germany is rich in natural resources such as coakl and iron ore. Heavy industry is located in populated areas and is a major air and water polluter. Germans recycle their waste. Glass is divided into colors for collection. German cities are very clean. Litter is not a problem. Graffiti is a problem, however. Forests are being replanted and endangered animals are being reintroduced. The lynx is one example. Another example of an introduced species, not originally, from Germany, is the raccoon. Many wild animals you might see are in Germany: the rabbit, deer, and fox. The wild boar is an unusual animal found in Germany.

RESOURCE SHEET 4: MOVEMENT

Movement includes many different concepts. People, animals, plants, goods and services, ideas, transportation and communication networks are all examples of movement evident in Germany. Animals and plants move. Forests are being replanted. Animals like the lynx are being reintroduced. Transportation networks are important to the economy of any region. Germany has many rivers, which move industrial goods. Some important rivers are Rhine, Main, Ruhr, Neckar, Ems, and Elbe. Rivers are connected by a system of canalization, which permits an even larger transportation network. Some important canals are Kiel, Dortmund-Ems, and the Mittelland. Germany is served by an extensive rail system and important superhighway network called the autobahn. Germany has an excellent education system. Germany needs skilled workers for its industries and research facilities. Most everybody understands a few words of English. German children go to school five days a week. Their school year is longer. They learn English, too. Due to the need for more workers, many people from other countries have immigrated to Germany. There are over 2,000,000 Turkish people in Germany. Italians and Greeks make up to other large "guest-workers" populations. There is increasing uneasiness with these groups because Germany is experiencing a large unemployment problem. Throughout its long history the borders have often changed. Germany lost territory after the Second World War. The last boundary change occurred in 1989 when East and West Germany were re-united.

RESOURCE SHEET 5: REGION

There are many ways to thing of Germany as a unique region in itself. Germany is a political unit. The Germany has a parliamentary government similar to the United States. Citizens elect their representatives. Germany has changed in size several times in its history. East Prussia and Silesia, both once part of Germany, are now part of Poland. Germany has states. Each state has a uniqueness all its own. Tourists enjoy visiting many sites throughout Germany. The money tourist spend is of great importance to the economy of Germany. Tourists come from all over the world to visit important historical sites. Germany is a very urban society. Its citizens mostly live in cities. They have many of the goods and services, which we are used to. Cities like Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Munich, and Hamburg have over a million people. . Germany is an important industrial region. Germany has the third largest economy in the world. Some famous Germany businesses, which produce goods sold in the US, are Daimler-Benz, BMW, Siemen's, Volkswagen, and Blaupunkt. Over half of Germany's exports go to neighboring European counties. Germany is a cultural region. Germans speak German who is also spoken in Switzerland, Austria, and parts of Poland and the Czech Republic. Germany is important in the arts. Ludwig van Beethoven, George Handel, and Johann Bach are composers. Walter Gropius and Friedrich Schinkel are famous architects. Some noted artists are Franz Marc, Albrecht Durer, and Max Beckmann. In literature, we have all read stories by the Brothers Grimm. Other famous authors are Gunther Grass, Thomas Mann, Friedrich Schiller, and Bertolt Brecht.

RESOURCE SHEET 6: QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR USE AS WRITING PROMPTS FOR USE WITH "DISCOVERING GERMANY."

1. Using a world map and the text, compare the location of Germany and our community. Making a diagram helps you prepare your response.

2. List three kinds of physical landmarks and three kinds of cultural landmarks found in Germany. List some of landmarks for our community. How are these landmarks similar? How are these landmarks different?

3. Describe the weather conditions in Germany. How are they the same or different from weather patterns found in our community?

4. Describe farming practices found in Germany. Describe a rural community near your school. How is farming the same or different in your community?

5. Describe how new immigrants to Germany become used to German customs. Describe how new students are helped to feel at home in your school. How do you and the Germans make newcomers feel welcome?

6. List farm products from Germany. List farm products grown on a farm near our school. In what ways are these products similar or different?

7. Explain transportation or communication networks in Germany. Which of these are found in our community? How has transportation (communication) helped make Germany a better place to live?

8. List all the ways Germany is an important region. Next to each way list an example.

RESOURCE SHEET 7:

FIVE FUNDAMENTAL THEMES OF GEOGRAPHY FOR GERMANY

1. LOCATION:

Relative:

Absolute:

2. PLACE:

Man-made landmarks

Natural landmarks

3. MOVEMENT:

Ideas, immigration, import/export, transport, communication

4. HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION:

Climate, resources, pollution

5. REGION:

Language, culture, industry, religion

RESOURCE SHEET 8: COMPARING GEOGRAPHY:

1. Contrast Germany and our community use the data from your chart. Include two ways they are different. Include two ways they are alike. Choose data from different categories.

2. What are some special land forms and water bodies that make Germany special? Use the atlas to help.

3. What are three natural landmarks and three cultural landmarks a visitor (tourist) might like to see? Choose one of each and explain why a tourist would want to see them.

RESOURCE SHEET 9: COMPARING CLIMATES OF TWO REGIONS

CATEGORY	BALTIMORE	BERLIN
Latitude	35N	52N
Feet above sea level	26	180
Climate type	humid subtropical	continental
January average temp.	41 F	37F
July average temp.	79 F	78F
Average rainfall	45 inches	30 inches
% Winter rainfall	50%	50%

Answer these questions about 2 climates.

1. List three ways climates are similar.

_____

2. List 2 ways climates are different.

_____

3. Which region probably needs irrigation for farming? Why?

_____

_____

4. Does elevation seriously affect climate in relation to the 2 regions?

_____

_____

_____

RESOURCE SHEET 10: COMPARING AVERAGE MONTHLY WEATHER

	Daily high temperature Degrees centigrade Baltimore /Berlin		number of rainy days Baltimore /Berlin	
January	6	2	11	17
February	7	3	10	15
March	12	8	12	12
April	18	13	11	13
May	24	19	12	12
June	28	22	11	13
July	31	24	11	14
August	29	23	11	14
September	25	20	8	12
October	19	13	8	14
November	13	7	9	16
December	7	3	10	15

1. Make a bar graph for each weather category.

2. Compare daily temperature within Baltimore and Berlin

Describe seasonal weather in Baltimore and Berlin.

3. Compare daily temperature between Baltimore and Berlin. How is seasonal temperature alike? How is it different? How are patterns the same?

4. Repeat questions 2 and 3. This time compare rainy days instead of temperatures.

MENTAL MAPPING

In this activity each group is asked to write down what they already know about the Germany or Germany region. This is a kind of mental mapping, sometimes called brainstorming. Brain storming encourages divergent thinking. Accessing prior knowledge is concept most elementary teachers of reading are familiar with. The children brain storm (mentally map) and make a group list. The teacher gives each group an outline map of Germany or Germany to focus their thinking processes. Older students can draw their own freehand outline map to focus their thinking. After brainstorming, each group then takes turns reporting their map of ideas to the whole class. Sometimes, the teacher acts as recorder and writes the entire class's ideas on a chart paper. Mental mapping is important in vocabulary and concept development. It's also important to discover misconception children have and correct these misconceptions during instruction. Mental mapping can also be used as a post-test to see what the children have learned about Germany during the unit.

USING GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS:

WEB

After reading the text and making notes about their reading, children use a Graphic organizer to display their data. A web is convenient and each group needs to decide which categories will be included in their web. Suggest that the students use the five fundamental themes of geography: location, place, movement, environment, and regions as categories. Or, the social studies concept chart (the ABC's for Germany or Germany) hanging in the room will offer many other categories for students to use. Students need to make a group decision concerning the use of categories for their web.

Some examples of web categories are: food, clothing, shelter, adornment, tools, weapons, housing/shelter, transportation, personal possessions, household articles, play, recreation, folk art, fine arts, Language and nonverbal communication, social organization: societies, families, and kinship systems social control: systems and governments institutions, rewards, and punishment economic organizations, trade, exchange, manufacturing, property, division of labor, standards of living, education, religions (From what are Universals of Culture? (Cleveland, Craven, and Danfelser, 1979).

VENN DIAGRAM

Use a Venn diagram to compare what we have learned about Germany or Germany with what we already know about the Chesapeake Bay region of Maryland. We use our own region as a springboard to learn more about other regions. It helps students understand new regions when they have their own community/ neighborhood/ region as a reference point. Each group will present their findings to the class. Classmates are encouraged to listen politely and ask questions.

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